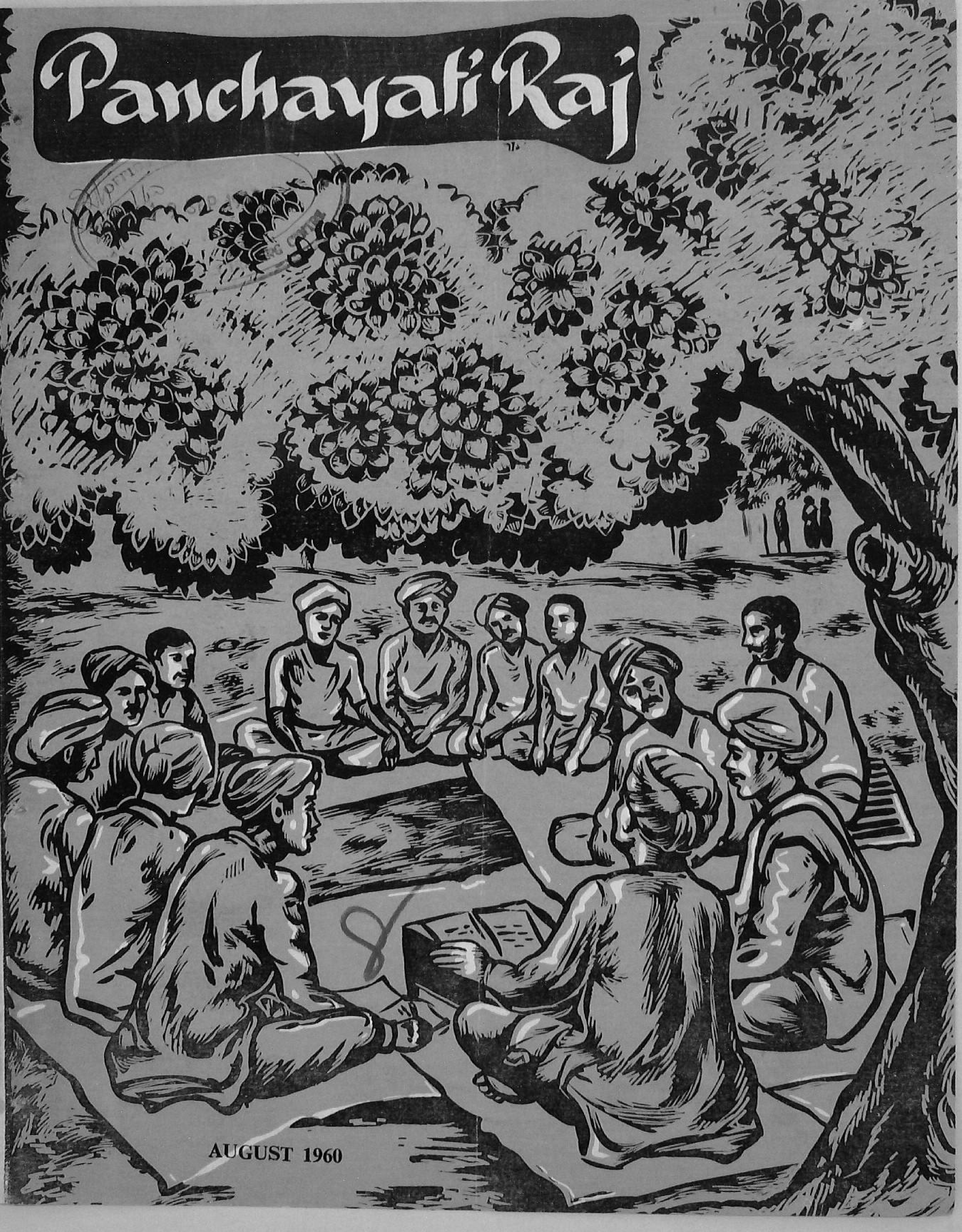
Panchayati Raj



AUGUST 1960

PANCHAYATI RAJ

(Incorporating Gram Sevak)

SRAVANA-BHADRA 1882

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Our Monthly Letter No. 5

New Delhi,
August 16, 1960.

Dear Comrade,

It requires two to quarrel. It requires two to be friends also. You cannot carry on conversation or correspondence from one side alone. We started "Panchayati Raj" about 4-5 months ago. I have been trying to send you a message every month. But I get no message in return, not even an echo. You will understand why I find it difficult to carry on this conversation totally one-sided.

Panchayati Raj is the system of Government we wish to develop in this country from the family upwards. Panchayati Raj means Government by the system of five. In essence, it means Government by discussion and collective consent or consensus. You cannot have Government by consent or consensus unless there is free and frank discussion. Such discussions mean controversies which get resolved freely.

From the Ministry of Community Development and Cooperation, we have been struggling hard to spread Panchayati Raj as fast as we can push it. We will continue our struggle. "Panchayati Raj" journal through which I send this message was to be a two-way courier between the Ministry and the people. I find unhappily that the journal still is a one-way traffic. It all goes from the top. I do not like even the look of it. There is something very artificial about it. This is no Panchayati Raj.

I am quarrelling with the Editor and the editorial staff. I am asking them to go out to the countryside and collect messages for the journal, fresh from you. But the editorial staff has a lot of other work to do. Even if they go out, they can go only for short distances. How can they cover the 550 thousand villages spread out in this sub-continent—two thousand miles from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and two thousand miles from Kutch to Nagaland?

If "Panchayati Raj" is to be representative of the 550 thousand villages, the journal must reflect the voice of the Panches in the countryside. Unless this happens, the journal will never be "Panchayati Raj." Call it by whatever name you choose. It will not help Panchayati Raj, nor act the open forum for it. The journal must needs represent your pulse beat. Four hundred million pulse beats should resound here like the thunder. We do not hear even a whisper. What is wrong with you? What is wrong with us? You must tell.

Yours sincerely,

S. K. Dey

Glimpses of Panchayati Raj

(A round-up of country-wide activities)

VIDUR

During the month of June, two important conferences were held which discussed important and basic issues having a great bearing on the course of Panchayati Raj and Sahakari Samaj, in the years to come. One of these conferences was the National Conference on Community Development in which besides the Minister and officers of the Union Ministry of Community Development, Development Commissioners of various States and people's representatives connected with the programme deliberated together to thrash out solutions of various problems. The other conference following close on the heels of the former was that of State Ministers of Cooperation.

The National Conference on Community Development noted with apparent satisfaction that nearly one year old scheme of Panchayati Raj had made good progress and expressed the hope that it would cover all the States by the end of the current year. Apart from the question of quantitative progress as reflected in the blanket coverage of the country as a whole under the new scheme of things, it is the qualitative difference that matters. We are more concerned with those subtle changes in the minds and hearts of the people, their hopes and aspirations, their urges and enthusiasm as are determined by the spread of the new cult. From all accounts coming to us, it appears that the scheme has already caught the imagination of the people of the States wherein it has been introduced. It has not only taken roots in the soil but has begun to grow and ramify. In Rajasthan where it was ushered in first of all, the village panchayats have begun to assume responsibility for diverse activities such as Locust Control and Small Savings Campaign.

Some of the Panchayat Samitis have already purchased their own equipment and insecticides and have set out to organise an efficient intelligence system in furtherance of the Locust Control operations. The Small Savings Scheme constitutes an important source of income which has not been tapped to the fullest extent in the rural areas, so far. However, it bids fair to be a great success now that people's representatives are in the Panchayat Samitis and they are capable of enlisting active cooperation of the villagers. The results so far achieved are encouraging and hopeful. What a useful role the village Panchayats can play in the social life of the country was amply demonstrated during the emergency caused by the strike of the Central Government employees. The Panchayats in some of the States like Punjab, Rajasthan and Bihar undertook to guard the railway tracks, telegraph lines and to protect other Government property. They did all in their power to prevent the essential services from breaking down and kept up the even flow of community life. Thus they proved to be the effective 'Second Front' on which the Government could always rely in times of crisis.

PEOPLES' CONTRIBUTION

The record of people's participation in 'Shramdan' drives, though a bit damped by the oncoming monsoons in some of the States was never-the-less quite impressive. It was the women of Malkhanpur village near Lucknow in U.P. who stole the limelight from their brothers, the menfolk in doing solid spade work. Under their inspiring leader Smt. Mohani Devi, a women's brigade consisting of about 35 ladies constructed a road 700 ft. long, 9 ft. high and 15 ft. wide. There are few men who would not feel proud of such an achievement.

The eternal struggle against the flood waters, carried to a pitch in the rainy season, has already begun. The sturdy peasants of Basman village in Dera Bassi Development Block in the Punjab have come forward to dig a two and a half-mile-long seepage drain to prevent damage from the flood waters of Ghaggar river.

In Chittoor District, the Ramakuppam Panchayat Samiti, during a two-day drive for securing people's contribution, succeeded in

collecting Rs. 12,000 in cash, a costly building and 8 acres of land. If this is even broadly indicative of what our village panchayats can achieve, our expectations from the new set-up of Panchayati Raj will be more than fulfilled. But it is not on public contributions or charities, however high or laudable these may be, that the Panchayats can or should depend for development work. Unless the Panchayats have a regular and assured income of their own, the tempo of development work will be precarious and uneven. The Rajasthan Government has taken a step in the right direction when it recently decided to allot 15 bighas of land in every village to the local panchayats for developing orchards and nurseries so as to ensure permanent income to them. Similar steps are being attempted in the Punjab State also. Other States would do well to adopt similar schemes.

COOPERATIVE FARMING

Alongside Panchayati Raj, Sahakari Samaj movement is gaining strength day by day. Cooperative Farming about which we have been hearing a lot seems at least to assume some practical shape. Here again, the two States of Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh, which were the first to usher in the Panchayati Raj, are also the first to cut ice in the field of Cooperative Farming. The Rajasthan Government is shortly launching a pilot project scheme on cooperative farming in Srimadhopur Block. Under the scheme, 114 irrigation wells fitted with pumping sets to be energised from Chambal power are being set up. About 1,700 bighas of land belonging to 1,500 cultivators are being brought under cooperative farming. In Andhra Pradesh, the scheme is still more ambitious. There it is proposed to do collective farming in 20,000 acres of land, and all the 10,000 agricultural labourers of the Kolleru lake villages will be the members of the Field Labour Cooperative Societies.

We have to go ahead rather cautiously with the programme of Cooperative farming since a set-back in the initial stages is likely to do more harm than good. Efficient service cooperatives in the first place is the safe rule recommended before switching over to cooperative farming. All-out efforts should, therefore, be made to establish service cooperatives in every village so that essential goods like fertilisers, improved implements and improved seeds are made available to the cultivators at their doorsteps. This will not only help increase our agricultural production but relieve the Block staff from lot of unnecessary botheration about the supplies and thus they would be in a position to devote more of their time to extension work for which they are really meant. From Mysore comes the heartening news that the State Government has appointed the State Cooperative Marketing Society as the sole distributor of fertilisers and iron and steel materials for agricultural purposes.

SHORTCOMINGS AND SHORTFALLS

We had our share of shortcomings and shortfalls too. News came that Bihar is in the grip of Panchayat election-fever for which the normal working of the C.D. programme had been disturbed. Though the polling is reported to have been peaceful generally, there were a few stray cases of snatching away of ballot boxes, intimidation of voters and armed clashes. Worse still are the reports suggesting that many villagers are divided into rival groups based on caste affiliations. If Panchayati Raj is to succeed, we must be on our guard against disruptive forces of casteism which has been the bane of our nation throughout the past ages. Anything which comes in the way of our forging a homogenous and well-knit community should be brushed aside and given a deep burial.

Time and again, the necessity of utilising to the fullest extent possible the local manurial resources such as compost, green manure and night soil has been brought home to our field workers and the peasants.

The latest to do so is the National Conference on Community Development, held at Srinagar sometimes ago. But progress in this direction seems to have met a dead wall. The task is no doubt very difficult. It involves all sorts of problems, practical, ideological and sociological.

But at the same time the work is undoubtedly so vital and crucial that the success or failure of the agricultural production programme can be traced directly to it. Hence we can ill-afford to admit defeat on this score. We have to gird up our loins and strive hard till the goal is reached.

KEY PERSONNEL

Now that we are switching over to the Panchayati Raj pattern, we can no longer afford to miss our technical key personnel for agriculture, animal husbandry, rural health and sanitation. Otherwise who will give the much-needed guidance and orientation to our elected representatives on whom rests the burden of development work now? Inability to man our various key posts with suitable personnel was inexcusable any time, but is almost criminal now. It is, however, a sad commentary on our working that we have not been able to fix up in position all the key personnel required in the block. It is reported that some posts of Lady Social Education Organisers, medical men, overseers and Gram Sevikas in several States are going abegging. We have to take a serious view of the situation and look into the causes why suitable personnel do not join our programme. The sooner we do it the better.

UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

The chronic unemployment and under-employment in the countryside remains as acute as ever. None of our efforts whether the village industries programme or the intensive cultivation schemes or the land development schemes have made significant impact on the employment situation. Where is the lacuna? Perhaps no single ready made answer can be given. We have been learning and shall continue to learn through the method of trial and error. We should not hesitate to look around us and see if there is light for our guidance. Here is village Berain, a Gramdan village in Bihar, which is reported to have solved its unemployment problem within a period of two years only. Everybody in the village works according to his capacity and receives from the village community one rupee a day for his or her maintenance. Perhaps we might adopt with advantage some of the schemes being followed there.

WORKING OF COOPERATIVES

Certain reports from the cooperative sector are rather disturbing. The annual report (1958-59) of the Cooperative Department of the Union Territory of Delhi points out that out of 150 cooperative stores 45 are defunct and 35 suffered losses, of 85 vegetable marketing and processing societies 35 are defunct and 22 suffered losses, of 366 industrial cooperatives 223 are defunct; in addition 121 miscellaneous societies are also defunct. It has further been reported that the total contribution raised by women thrift societies run departmentally amounted to Rs. 7,780 and the pay of the women staff to look after them totalled Rs. 18,000. There is no doubt that far too many of our cooperative societies are on paper only; they never function. Not a few are mismanaged and run indifferently. It will be any day better to close down all such bogus and inefficient societies. In their absence, the march of Sahakari Samaj movement will be smoother and quicker. The Kerala Govt. has taken the right step in deciding to liquidate on grounds of inefficiency and mismanagement nearly 50 per cent of the 4,000 cooperative societies. It is learnt that Rajasthan Government has also tightened its machinery to improve the working of cooperatives. Whereas a complaints section set up in the department will tend to counteract inefficiency and dishonesty among officials and to ameliorate the grievances of cooperators, the issuing of a short audit review will help keep the societies on the correct track of organisational working.

The usual charge levelled against the coperatives that they are 'Sarkari' rather than 'Sahkari' has perhaps some justification behind it. The 'de-officialisation' programme of the cooperatives though already in hand has not progressed far enough to make any impact on the people's minds. That explains why the Karnatak Divisional cooperative conference, held recently, passed a resolution protesting against the growing control over cooperative societies. The main opposition was voiced against the method of nominating the

boards of management of new societies and the way in which the Government tried to control indirectly the societies receiving Government aid.

A BOLD EXPERIMENT

The problem of finding ways and means to provide credit to the landless cultivators, village artisans and other backward classes without asking for securities of land or property is very appropriately in the limelight these days. It was the V. L. Mehta Committee on Cooperative credit which focussed attention on the subject and its recommendations have since been accepted by the National Conference on Community Development held recently at Srinagar. Any red-tape coming in the way of implementation of this urgent scheme should be cut asunder. If there are any doubts as to the creditworthiness of small farmers, these should be set at rest by the results obtained in a bold experiment carried out recently by the Indian Cooperative Union in a number of Delhi villages. Loans were given to small cultivators without asking for mortgage of land or property or insisting on any sureties. The farmers have repaid this trust lodged in them by the Union, in a very encouraging manner. As much as 94 per cent of the loans due to the union have been repaid. Let us build our faith in our people and raise the edifice of Panchayati Raj and Sahkari Samaj—a task to which we have dedicated ourselves!

PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

THE IMPORTANCE of securing public cooperation in implementing development programmes has been recognised from the time the First Plan was launched. The draft outline of the third Five Year Plan says, "It should be the common purpose of official agencies, local self-governing bodies, voluntary organisations, educational institutions and professional and other associations to identify the main needs of each local community and find fields of common endeavour, thus enabling the people of each area to achieve greater cohesion and a common social outlook."

The role of voluntary organisations in promoting activities which have a close bearing on local welfare has proved of particular help. Large numbers of voluntary workers, including women, have come forward to shoulder new responsibilities. The voluntary organisations, in turn, have been assisted by the Central and State authorities in the execution of specific programmes. This assistance has been given in the form of services of trained and full-time workers, engineers, etc.

Special mention may be made of the work done by the Bharat Sevak Samaj for providing protection against floods in the Kosi in Bihar. Thousands of rural people were mobilised in the task of putting up embankments and other flood protection measures on this "river of sorrow", which used to bring suffering to countless people in North Bihar year after year. The Kosi people's project has shown that the participation of voluntary bodies makes for economy and provides satisfaction to workers, apart from augmenting resources for providing local amenities.

A number of voluntary organisations have devoted themselves to work in rural areas. The welfare extension projects started by the Central and State Social Welfare Boards, as part of the Community Development movement, have given opportunities to a large number of women workers to serve in these areas. Well known organisations like the Sarva Seva Sangh, the Harijan Sevak Sangh, the Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh and the Kasturba Gandhi Memorial Trust are conducting their activities mainly in the villages. Certain areas, known as Lok Karya Kshetras, have been selected for intensive participation of the people in welfare and development programmes. Workers are trained for organising and conducting the programmes.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Community Development programme is centred on the active and willing participation of the rural people in programmes designed to provide increasing amenities in villages, step up agricultural output and add to the

(*Continued on page* 10)

PROGRESS OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

"PANCHAYATI RAJ" differs considerably from what until recently has been known as "Panchayat Raj". While the latter denotes a greater role in local civic affairs by the village panchayat, "Panchayati Raj" means the devolution of powers and responsibilities for all developmental works to statutory bodies of people's elected representatives from the village upwards—from the Gram Sabha to the Lok Sabha.

Till recently, panchayats and other forms of local self-government were treated more as instruments or agencies of the State Government than as self-governing institutions of the people. They did not command respect of the people. Experience gained in the implementation of the Community Development Programme showed that people's participation can be obtained only by well-organised and fully empowered units of local administration. Thus came the altogether new concept of Panchayati Raj. It is something more than Panchayat Raj, something more than mere decentralisation of authority to local agencies of the State Government. Its emphasis is on the creation of democratic institutions of the people, chosen by them and answerable to them, so that statutory bodies of the people at local level determine local policies and become responsive to the needs and wishes of the local people. Under the system of Panchayati Raj, the local authorities not only plan but also execute their own programmes of development, in conformity with the basic needs of the community.

THE NEW ORDER

The system also provides an essential link between the local government and the Community Development Programme, both rooted in the principle that sovereignty ultimately resides in the people. The link, established under the system, between the people living in small village communities and their representatives functioning at different levels, from Gram Sabha right up to the National Parliament, also ensures the unity of national policies and national planning —the link between the Zila Parishad and the State Legislature and the National Parliament is provided by the representation of the M.L.As. and M.Ps. in the Zila Parishad. It is indeed this aspect of Panchayati Raj which explains the fundamental difference between the previous pattern of local self-governing bodies, such as the District Boards and Local Boards and the new order being ushered in the rural India.

Thus, while the Community Development Programme served to give the country an administrative unity and a common pattern of development, Panchayati Raj has provided a uniform pattern for the planning and execution of all developmental works at village, block and district levels.

During the last one year, substantial responsibility for the planning and execution of development programmes at the village level has been transferred in most States to the village Panchayats. Wherever Block Panchayat Samitis have come into being, control over the planning and execution of the C.D. programme including administrative control over the Block staff, resources and the programme, has also been transferred to them.

UP-TO-DATE PROGRESS

Following is the up-to-date picture of the progress of legislation in different States :—

Andhra Pradesh: The State has taken steps to transfer the powers and functions of the District Boards, and to allocate their assets and liabilities, to the 235 Panchayat Samitis and 20 Zilla Parishads set up under the scheme. While the control of elementary schools has been transferred to the Panchayat Samitis, that of secondary schools now vests in the Zila Parishads. The Andhra Pradesh Village Panchayats Bill, 1959, which aims at uniformity of legislation in regard to Panchayats in the State (at present governed by Madras Panchayat Act, 1960, for the old Andhra, and Hyderabad Village Panchayats Act, 1956, for the Telengana area) is before the State Legislature.

Assam: The State has set up Panchayats at village level, Anchalik Panchayats at Block

level and Mohakuma Parishads at the sub-divisional level, all over the State. To facilitate the implementation of the scheme, the State Government constituted 118 *ad hoc* Anchalik Panchayat Committees and 16 *ad hoc* Mohakuma Parishad Committees by vitrue of an ordinance. Fresh elections to the Gaon Panchayats have since been held and directly elected bodies would soon replace the *ad hoc* bodies. Funds have been allotted to reach subdivision on the basis of 25 per cent of land revenue, as also some local rates for distribution among the *ad hoc* Anchalik Panchayats and Gaon Panchayats.

Bihar: The State is likely to accept the three tier system. A Committee, with the State Minister for Local Self-Government as Chairman, has been appointed to recommend to Government the most suitable form of organisation at the district level.

Gujerat & Maharashtra: According to available indications, the two new States are likely to decide in favour of the three-tier system of Panchayati Raj.

Jammu & Kashmir: The State has set up Panchayats at village level and Panchayat Advisory Boards at the block level. Local bodies at the district level are at present considered premature by the State Government.

Kerala: Powers have already been transferred to 146 Panchayats within the framework of the existing laws to plan and implement the development programmes. The Kerala State Administrative Reforms Committee recommended a three-tier system of local administration, *viz.*, village Panchayats, Taluk Councils and District Councils. The Kerala District Councils Bill and the Kerala Panchayat Bills were under the consideration of the Select Committees when the last State Legislature was dissolved. The new Government proposes to take up a new and comprehensive legislation on Panchayati Raj very soon.

Madhya Pradesh: A new Bill for setting up a three-tier system of Panchayati Raj in the State has been introduced and is now before the Select Committee.

Madras: The 12 Revenue Districts of the State have been delimited into 21 Development Districts with a Development Council in each. The Panchayat Unions are proposed to be constituted according to a phased programme all over the State in three consecutive stages beginning with 75 Blocks in October this year.

Mysore: The State Government have accepted the three-tier system. The middle tier will be at the Taluk level and, like the village Panchayat, will be directly elected. The Development Council at the District level has been indirectly formed.

Orissa: Legislation enacted by the State Legislature in its December, 1959 Session envisages Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads at the Block and District levels respectively. It is expected that the scheme will be implemented during this year.

Punjab: The State proposes to introduce a Bill on Panchayati Raj in the next session of the State Legislature. Legislation amending the Punjab Gram Panchayats Act and applying the amended Act to the entire State (repealing the PEPSU Panchayat Act) has already been enacted.

Rajasthan: The State has gone ahead of most other States in India, 232 Panchayat Samitis and 26 Zila Parishads have been constituted in the State and are functioning.

Uttar Pradesh: There are indications that the U.P. Government is likely to decide in favour of a statutory three-tier system.

West Bengal: The State is going ahead with the setting up of Gram Panchayats and Anchal Panchayats. The question of setting up higher level statutory bodies will be considered only after Panchayats etc. start functioning.

Union Territories: Delhi has constituted 205 Gram Panchayats, grouped into 22 Circle Panchayats. Panchayat Presidents are fully represented in the Block Development Committees. The Delhi Administration has recruited 73 Panchayat Secretaries and 2 Panchayat Inspectors. Manipur and Tripura have enforced the Uttar Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act, 1947. In Tripura, Panchayats are being constituted. In Himachal Pradesh, the Planning Advisory Board recently set up a sub-committee to frame proposals for implementation.

LETTERS

Progress Assistant

Sir,

I read with interest the letter entitled 'Our Statistics' published in the April issue of your journal. I have to say something in this connection.

The present role of the Progress Assistant is not at all satisfactory. He has to spend the first 10 days in a month collecting data from the Gram Sevaks and the Extension officers and then collating them. The remaining 20 days he remains busy in dealing with minor complaints which have got nothing to do with his job. Thus the month passes away.

Progress Assistants in fact are Evaluation officers at the Block level. As such they deserve more facilities and powers. In order that the progress made is assessed correctly it is very much necessary that the data furnished be checked at the root. This is a job which the Progress Assistants can do very effectively.

I would therefore suggest that on-the-spot check should be made compulsory for the Progress Assistants and a certain number of days in a month be specified for their undertaking tours. It would be better if the Statistical experts of the State Governments prepare a job chart and a proforma for them. The job chart should lay emphasis on on-the-spot check and the proforma should have columns to fill in about the correctness of the data checked. These steps when taken will improve the quality of the statistics gathered at the Block level. Besides, in view of the nature of the job a Progress Assistant is expected to perform, it would be appropriate to change his designation to Extension officer (Evaluation).

30.7.60 Yours etc.,

D. B. Khairmode

Khandala (Barada)
Maharashtra.

Gram Sahayak or Gram Sevak

Sir,

Gram Sevaks in my block as well as those working in the neighbouring blocks are faced with a piquant situation. Their multipurpose function is being misunderstood, and their role as a "friend, philosopher and guide" to the villagers is being misinterpreted. At the root of the existing confusion lies the designation "Gram Sevak" which the villagers interpret in its literal sense. They feel that since the word Gram Sevak means "servant of the village" the incumbents should be treated as such. As a result the treatment meted out to most of the Gram Sevaks is some what akin to that of domestic servants. When a Gram Sevak fails to abide by the wishes of a villager he is threatened with complaints and dire consequences. This attitude of the villagers has made the position of Gram Sevaks very precarious. The way out, I feel, lies in the change of the designation to a new one which can give the poor worker some honour and prestige. In this context I suggest that a better designation will be "Gram Sahayak"—which means "one who wants to help the villagers". This would be consistent with the role and function of the present incumbent. But before this suggestion is accepted, it would be necessary to change the designation of persons who are at present called "Gram Sahayaks", and who are in fact progressive farmer-cum-village assistants. Very often the Panchayat Secretaries are selected from amongst Gram Sahayaks. In order to straighten the matter I would suggest that the Panchayat Secretary be designated as "Panchayat Sachiv". The designations decided once for all would save the field workers from unnecessary harassment.

7-7-60 Yours etc.,

Arvind S. Deshmukh

E. O. (Rural Engineering)
Stage II Block, Amravati
Maharashtra.

COMMUNITY ON THE MOVE

A COOPERATIVE VILLAGE

Hridayapur is a small village with a total population of 900 in the Chiraigaon Development Block in Uttar Pradesh. Development work was started here three years ago. During this period the villagers have completed construction works worth Rs. 45,000 with rare enthusiasm. Among the buildings constructed by the villagers is a *Vikas Bhavan*, a library building, a primary school and two bath rooms. About 1,800 feet long village lanes were also converted into neat and well built roads. The villagers have decided to build a six-furlong road and two bridges during the current year.

Other activities are not neglected in the village. Every farmer in the village uses improved seeds, improved implements and applies improved methods in his farm due to which the agricultural income of the village has increased by 40 per cent over what it previously was. The Gram Sabha stocks several improved implements for agriculture. Every family of the village is a member of the *Sahakari Samiti*. The village has won the first prize for best agricultural work in the district and second prize for the best Panchayat. Disputes of the village are now settled by the Panchayat.

* * * *

VILLAGE WITH SHOWER BATHS

KAPILESWARAPURAM village with a population of 7,821 and about 2,000 families is the Headquarters of the Kapileswarapuram Panchayat Samiti. This village Panchayat with an annual income of about Rs. 8,000 has made rapid strides. It has taken up an aided self-help-programme valued at about Rs. 2 lakhs. It has provided in the village a High School, a Government Hospital, a Vigyan Mandir, a Veterinary Dispensary, a Post and Telegraph office, a Panchayat Ghar, a Cooperative Marketing Society, a large sized Cooperative Credit Society and five elementary Schools. A maternity wing will soon be added to the Government Hospital and a pucca building at an estimated cost of Rs. 50,000 is now under construction for that purpose. Pucca village roads, paved streets, cemented drains, public shower baths, septic tanks, public latrines and protected water supply through street taps are some other activities adding lusture to the Panchayat.

* * * *

FIRST FRUITS OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

THE PANCHAYATI Raj ushered in Andhra Pradesh has begun to bear its first fruits. In Chittoor district the Ramakuppan Panchayat Samiti made history by organising a two-day drive for securing people's cooperation which was an unqualified success. It has raised contributions to the tune of twelve thousand rupees, in addition to a costly building, eight acres of land for establishing two higher elementary and two middle schools, twenty industrial cooperatives and a hundred acres of lemon and grape gardens.

* * * *

A WOMEN'S BRIGADE FOR SHRAMDAN

WHAT MAY be described as a women's brigade for Shramdan has been organised by Shrimati Mohini Devi of Malkhanpur village in the Asafpur Block of Badaun district.

Consisting of about 35 village women, the brigade has often wrested the initiative in social service from the

brawny menfolk of Malkhanpur. Its latest achievement which has made it the cynosure of all eyes in Asafpur Block has been the construction of a road 700 feet long, 9 feet high and 15 feet wide.

* * * *

The need for the construction of the road arose because of the fact that year after year during the rainy season Malkhanpur village used to get marooned on account of water-logging. For days on end many families were forced to subsist on parched grains. Cases of drowning were not infrequent. Shrimati Mohini Devi herself had lost her eight-year-old daughter in a drowning accident.

At a village meeting, therefore, it was decided to construct a road which besides facilitating movement might also serve as a bund to prevent floods.

On the date and time fixed for starting the work, while the village men were still yawning, the energetic Mohini Devi and 33 of her devoted lieutenants were busy with their spades and shovels turning up the first sods of earth at the work site. The unit ungrudgingly defied the sizzling heat of the sun and after seven days of sweating completed what is now a boon to Malkhanpur.

* * *

SUBEDAR RAISES A COLONY

It is understood that our Prime Minister has congratulated Subedar Nagindar Singh for the splendid work done by him in village Raipur Majri, nearly 30 miles from Ludhiana and invited him to meet him at Delhi. The Subedar has set an example in self-help by raising a colony named after Guru Nanak, the first Guru of Sikhs, entirely with his own initiative and labour. The colony now possesses a dispensary, a veterinary hospital, a primary school for girls, a panchayat ghar, a public library, a rest house and a *gurdwara*. The Subedar plans to convert the primary school into a high school and to construct a clock tower.

* * *

A GRAMDAN VILLAGE

Berain, in Monghyr district, is a 'gramdan' village which has solved the problem of unemployment for the villagers within a period of two years. Every body in the village works according to his capacity and receives from the village community one rupee a day for his maintenance. The village cannot afford to pay him more at the present level of its development. Those of its residents, who work in the neighbouring villages and earn more than a rupee, deposit the extra amount in the village fund. The village is trying hard to raise its standard of living and it has prepared a five-year plan. The Plan aims to provide every family with a pucca house with brick walls and tiled roof.

Within two years the village has accumulated a working capital of Rs. 25,000 through voluntary savings, by Shramdan, mass spinning etc. This is an exemplary achievement. The problem of capital formation, is one that has baffled our country's planners and forced us to stretch our hands before foreign countries. If five and a half lakh villages of India emulated the example of Berain village, our country might accumulate at least Rs. 600 crores as capital each year.

PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

(*Continued from page* 5)

productive resources of the community. With the introduction of Panchayati Raj in several States, the execution of these programmes is now being entrusted to elected representatives of the people. Non-official organisations like the Mahila Mandals, Youth Clubs and Gram Sahayaks have also played a useful role in promoting development work in their respective spheres.

SOCIAL SERVICE CAMPS

About half a million young men and women have taken part in social service and voluntary labour camps since the beginning of the Second Plan. These camps were organised to assist in the execution of development and welfare programmes. The number of such "people's participation" camps organised during the first four years of the Second Plan is more than 5,000. The camps were sponsored and run by organisations like the Bharat Ṣevak Samaj, the Bharat Scouts and Guides, the National Cadet Corps and the Auxiliary Cadet Corps, apart from other local organisations.

Cowherd Boys Build A School

B. S. SOMESWARAIAH

You MIGHT wonder, what the cowherd boys—with bare minimum of clothes on their bodies and sticks in their hands—could do except to tend the cattle wealth of the community. But Lo! Here they are! A magnificent school building owes its existence to them.

The scene of action is a tiny village called Rampur in the Development Block, Malur (Mysore State), with a population of about 450. The village is not on the road side, though not also very much in the interior.

There was a small school in this village. The school was housed in a dilapidated building, but it overflowed with students. The leaders of the village wanted to have a proper building for the school. With great difficulty, they managed to collect Rs. 600 as their contribution. It was estimated that the building would cost at least Rs. 1,400. From where was the balance of Rs. 800 to be found? The village leaders tried to raise this money, but failed. A good site for the building was not also available. Nor was the money the only problem faced by the village leaders. Nobody would give a plot. A Government land was available, but by its side there was a big insanitary pit. The officers did not allow a building on this site because of the offensive smell. The people did not care to fill the pit and hence the problem remained unsolved. Thus for over two years, the classes continued to be held in the dilapidated building.

CREATING INTEREST

Some time ago, a new Gram Sevak was posted to this Circle. He visited the school and introduced himself to the school teacher. The teacher explained to him that the village leaders were not in a position to raise enough funds for constructing the school building. The Gram Sevak promised to deal with the problem. He met the village leaders and explained to them the necessity of having a good building for the school. He told them that the building of the school should be located in healthy surroundings so that the students might imbibe the spirit of cleanliness and good humour. At first the leaders were reluctant to talk about the school. They said they were not in a position to raise any more funds. Of course, they could not be expected to do the menial work of filling the pit.

Creating interest and enthusiasm in the villagers for a new work is like directing the movement of an old automobile. An old automobile has to be pushed for a long distance and the clutch has to be frequently applied before its engine gets started. Even after this, the driver has to work under heavy strain to keep the engine working. The villagers do not behave in a very much different way.

So the new Gram Sevak set about his task of enthusing the villagers with persistence and calm confidence. He wanted to kindle a genuine desire among the villagers for a school of their own. He developed contact with the villagers by visiting them regularly for about six months.

ONE PROBLEM SOLVED

One evening he sent word to all the villagers to assemble in the village temple. Nobody turned up. The Gram Sevak returned back home with a heavy heart. On the following evening, he again tried to assemble the villagers with the cooperation of the village Patel and the Chairman of the village panchayat. But he failed again. As per the suggestion of the

Gram Sevak a songster was summoned and he was requested to sing. In spite of that nobody came. So the Gram Sevak thought he would not call the villagers this time but himself go to them with the village Patel and the Chairman and request everyone to assemble near the temple. This time, even though most of the people had gone to bed after the day's hard labour they responded to his request. The Gram Sevak made a fervent appeal to the villagers to cooperate in the construction of the school building. He made it clear that the pit had to be filled up and that he would take the responsibility of finding the wherewithal to get the building constructed. It was decided to fill up the pit through Community 'Shramdan.' One fine morning all the people assembled near the temple with their carts and the insanitary pit was filled up. It took nearly one and a half day for 30 carts and 60 men to fill the pit.

ANOTHER PROBLEM

One problem was solved but now there was another big problem, that of finding the balance money of Rs. 800. It was not possible to collect any more donations from individuals. Some years back, the cowherd boys of the village had collected a fund of Rs. 800 by pooling their petty daily savings of 10 to 12 nP per day, for constructing a temple in honour of a jungle diety by name Muthuraya Swamy. The Gram Sevak appealed to them to donate this amount towards the school. But they grew wild and began to scold him.

A decade ago the people of the village had entrusted the work of constructing the temple of Muthuraya Swamy to a certain gentleman and gave him the necessary amount out of the common fund of the village. He had taken the entire amount from the villagers but did not construct the temple on the pretext that there were some factions in the village and all the people did not desire the temple to be built. The Gram Sevak at last succeeded in persuading the gentleman to construct the temple. So once again a meeting of the villagers was called. The Gram Sevak explained to the cowherd boys the new development about the construction of Muthuraya Swamy temple. He informed them that the temple would be completed as per the old commitment and when once the temple is completed there is no reason for the cowherd boys to refuse to donate their fund for the school, now that their object of building the Muthuraya Swamy temple will fulfilled. They readily agreed to part with the amount. Immediately the work of school construction was entrusted to an enthusiastic person of the village. He completed the building as per the design supplied by the Block authorities. The classes are now being held regularly in the new building. The cowherd boys of the village while driving the herd of cattle to the forest daily pass by the school building and gaze upon it with a sense of pride and satisfaction at their own contribution towards its establishment.

PHOTOGRAPHS INVITED

Photographs on Community Development Programme and Cooperation are invited for use in this journal and other allied publications. Subjects depicting field operations and other activities are preferred. Accepted photographs will be paid for at our usual rates. Contributors are requested to send full-plate size glossy prints or even contact prints in the first instance for a preliminary selection. Each photograph should be accompanied by a short write-up. Unselected protographs will be returned promptly. The Editor will not hold himself responsible for any loss or damage to prints in transit. Photographs are to be sent to—

The Editor, Panchayati Raj, Ministry of Community Development and Cooperation, Krishi Bhavan, New Delhi.

YOUR SOIL IS YOUR BANK

FARMYARD MANURE

Farmyard manure is best made in pits. The size and the number of pits depend upon the number of cattle. Normally, each pit should be ten feet long, four feet broad and three feet deep.

Most farmers collect cattle-dung from their cattle sheds, but they allow the urine to go waste. Urine is valuable. It is rich in plant foods. As such, it should not be wasted. For this, line the floor of your cattle-shed with concrete or ram hard metal on it, so that the urine will not seep into the ground. Collect farm wastes, waste fodders or weeds and spread this material on the floor of the cattle-shed. It will form a good bed for the animals and it will absorb all the urine. Afterwards, mix the urine-soaked litter with cattle-dung and put it in the pit. It is better to fill the pit in compartments. For this, make a partition of bamboo sticks, dry stalks of *jowar* or maize or some such material. Keep the partition about a foot or a foot and a half away from one end of the pit. Collect cattle-dung daily and mix it thoroughly with the urine-soaked litter. Put the whole mixture in the compartment you have made in the pit. Sprinkle earth over it. Put the second day's collection over the first day's collection. Repeat till the heap rises a foot above ground level. Cover it with a two-inch layer of soil. Shift the partition another foot or a foot and a half away. Fill this compartment as you did the first one. Repeat till the whole pit is filled. If you are not able to dig a pit or if you are in a hilly area, you can prepare farmyard manure in a heap above ground. For this purpose, select a rocky area 12 feet long and eight feet broad. Line it with stones or bricks to make a six-inch high platform. Spread on the platform the day's collection of cattle wastes in a layer six to eight inches high. Spread a two-inch thick layer of earth over it. Go on adding more cattle wastes and earth daily. When the heap is four or five feet high give the top a conical shape. Plaster the top now with dung and earth. You will get well-rotten farmyard manure in four to six months.

PREPARING COMPOST

A very good manure can be prepared from farm wastes such as crop stubbles, sugarcane trash, banana skins and stumps, weeds and vegetable wastes. This material can be composted in pits or heaps. First, crush under a roller all hard materials like sugarcane stubbles, *Jowar* stubbles, dry stalks, etc. Split up and cut all the soft but bigger-sized materials like banana stumps. Dig a pit of the same size as in the case of farmyard manure. Heap all the available refuse round the pit to make the material decompose easily. You have to use a starter. The starter can be dung or urine. If these are not available, well-decomposed manure, tank silt or surface scrapings from forests can be used. To make a good compost, you would also need some ash and dry earth. First, put the refuse in the pit in a layer about a foot high. Sprinkle 16 gallons (four or five buckets) of water and a thick paste made with 60 pounds (two buckets) of dung in 16 gallons of water. Spread half a basket of ash and one basket of the starter on the layer. Put the second layer of trash over this. Five such layers will bring the heap two feet above ground level. Cover this with a three-inch layer of soil on top. See that you fill the pit completely in a day or two. The manure will be ready for use in six to eight months. Compost prepared this way is twice as rich in plant foods as farmyard manure. Every acre of land should receive at least about ten cartloads of compost in addition to other plant nutrients.

WEEDING

In addition to the supply of plant nutrients to the soil, adoption of improved agricultural practices, which help to conserve the available plant nutrients, is important. Weeds affect the farmer in many ways. First, they compete with the crops for water and nutrients in the soil, and for light. In this competition, they have the upper hand. Many of them can thrive under adverse conditions. They can establish and spread quickly. They produce large quantities of seeds. Some

weeds produce as much as ten lakh seeds on a single plant in one season. They can remain alive even though buried under the soil for a long time. Some of them can retain their germinating power for 10, 20 or even 40 years. How can crops face this formidable competition without the farmer's help? If the farmers allow the weeds to grow, the crop yields are considerably reduced. The loss due to weeds depends on the crop, the season and the intensity and spread of weeds. Weeds in a wheat field, if left unchecked, reduce the grain yield by nearly five maunds (200 seers) in some places. They remove from the soil as much as 17 pounds of nitrogen from an acre. This is equivalent to what a maund of ammonium sulphate would supply. Weeds are the thieves which the cultivators should fear most. The weeds give shelter to insects and disease germs which affect the crop later. They reduce the quality and the market value of crops. The presence of certain weeds in wheat will make it unfit for milling as they impart an objectionable odour. Weeds also choke up drains, channels and even tanks. They reduce the value of land. But they can be kept under check by various methods such as by using clean seeds, keeping irrigation channels and water courses free from weeds and by undertaking weeding operations occasionally.

WINTER CULTIVATION

The fields recently vacated by Kharif crops and at present lying fallow till the sowing at the next monsoon should be ploughed up in areas where winter rains make such ploughing up easier, otherwise, weeds would grow and shed seed. During the next sowing the seeds would germinate along with the crop. By ploughing up the land at least once during the winter, the growth and seed-formation of weeds is checked and their effect on the next crop considerably reduced. This preliminary ploughing could be undertaken wherever winter rains make such ploughing possible on fields lying fallow particularly in the northern states.

LEVELLING AND BUNDING

Loss of plant nutrients to the soil occur by the physical removal of soil by water or wind. When severe, it may cause the loss of much or all of the top soil. If the soil itself is lost, the nutrients it contains are also lost and the crop yield is correspondingly reduced. Actually nutrient loss is greater than might be expected at first glance. If, for example, one-tenth of the top soil is washed away, more than one-tenth of the nutrients of the top soil are lost since these nutrients are mainly found in the finer soil particles which erode most easily and are the first to be washed away. Since an actual physical loss of the soil thus occurs, losses of nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium, which are the essential plant nutrients, are proportionately the same. The extent of erosion is governed by many factors including the slope of the land, intensity and duration of rainfall or violence of the wind, the crop of the land and the characteristics of the soil itself.

One of the means of reducing the soil loss is proper levelling of the fields; another means is bunding. Wherever the fields are uneven water-logging and uneven distribution of irrigation water results, and that adversely affects plant growth. In most of the areas which have had recent winter rains, these operations are possible.

While proper bunding of undulating or sloping land for the conservation of soil and water need careful survey and expert advice, in comparatively level lands it may be taken up by the cultivator himself without expert guidance. Bunding may be done in fields which are at present fallow. The bunds will help check the run off of rain water of the first heavy monsoon showers, which would otherwise carry away much of the precious top soil. The bunds will also ensure a better in-soak of rain water in the fields, thereby ensuring a better reserve of soil moisture to sustain the subsequent kharif crops. Even where the field is to be shown in Rabi, bunding will help in preventing the washing away of soil, most of which is caused by the first heavy monsoon showers. The bunds may be two feet wide at the base and nine to twelve inches high.

NEWS FROM THE STATES

ANDHRA PRADESH

All the 10,000 agricultural labourers of the Kolleru lake villages will be members of the Field Labour Cooperative Societies to do collective farming in 20,000 acres of land covered by 40 Societies. When the scheme is implemented, over 23,000 tons of paddy it is estimated, will be produced in the collective farms. The scheme provides short term loan of Rs. 100 per acre to meet the cost of an oil engine for every Society. Various drainage facilities are to be provided at Government expenses, and estimated to cost the Government of Andhra Pradesh for Rs. 10,00,000.

* * *

DELHI

About 1,000 families of village Pooth Kalan, in Kanjhwala block, Delhi State, have set an example in Community Development activity by removing over four lakh cubic feet of earth from their village tank within two weeks. About 1,200 men, women and children worked four hours a day on this project and cleaned the 15-foot-deep tank within a week.

* * *

Significant results are now available from a bold experiment in credit to small farmers, started by the Indian Co-operative Union in a number of Delhi villages since 1956. The Union advanced, till the Kharif crop of 1959, short-term loans to 970 small farmers spread over 14 villages of the Mehrauli Block in Delhi and representing about 68 per cent of the total number of farming families. The size of the short-term loans ranged from Re. 1 to Rs. 225.50 with an average of Rs. 15.28 to Rs. 40.33 during different crop periods. The loans were used by the farmers mainly for purchase of improved seed and chemical fertilizers.

No collateral security such as mortgage of property or a pledge on tangible assets was required. The productive capacity of the proposed farming operation and the potentialities of the farm family were considered adequate securities. The farmers have justified the trust reposed in them by the Union, in a very encouraging manner. The percentage of cash recovery of short-term loans ranged from 87 per cent to 95 per cent of the amount actually due during the different crop seasons, an average working out at 94 per cent for all the three crop seasons.

This shows that the Indian farmer, even with a relatively small land holding is a good credit risk, if assisted with proper agricultural extension service and the credit required to adopt improved agricultural practices. It also indicates that with such assistance the small farmer can make substantial increase in food production.

KERALA

According to the Panchayat Bill to be shortly introduced in the Assembly, the panchayats will be constituted by direct election on the basis of adult franchise and will consist of nine to 15 members according to the population of the area of the panchayat. There will be reservation of one seat for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes provided the number of voters belonging to such classes is not less than five per cent of the total number of voters in that panchayat area. Provision has also been made in the Bill for the nomination of a woman as a member of the panchayat if no woman is otherwise elected as a member to that panchayat.

MAHARASHTRA

The schemes of prize competitions among village level workers and villages in Maharashtra State are being continued during 1960-61. The period of competitions will be from April 1, 1960 to March 31, 1961. The prizes for the best village level workers at the District and State levels will be Rs. 200 and Rs. 1,000 each, respectively.

The items of work for assessing the achievements of village level workers and villagers for the prize competition scheme are:—

The number of poultry or hatching eggs of the improved type (for villages);

Increase in membership and share capital of all co-operative societies and extension of rural credit;

Percentage of overdues to total outstandings for all the societies within the circle;

Percentage of rural families covered by service co-operatives;

Quality of seeds, fertilisers and other supplies distributed by the co-operatives;

Quality of seeds, fertilisers and other supplies distributed by the co-operatives;

Percentage of rural families producing compost.

Percentage of families adopting any three of the following :—

(i) adoption of recommended soil conservation measures.

(ii) adoption of recommended water conservation measures,

(iii) use of fertilisers,

(iv) use of plant protection materials,

(v) use of improved methods of cultivation and

(vi) approved measures of cattle improvement like castration of scrub bulls and artificial insemination of cattle, etc.

RAJASTHAN

PANCHAYAT Samitis in Rajasthan decided to contribute their mite in keeping the country's essential services running during the emergency strike of the Central Government employees. They undertook to guard Railway tracks and telegraph lines.

* * *

A PILOT PROJECT scheme for Cooperative farming which will cost Rs. 4 lakhs is to be launched in Srimadhopur Block, Rajasthan. Under the scheme 114 irrigation wells will be constructed and pumping sets will be installed. Chambal power is expected to be made available to this area by the time the wells are ready. The wells are expected to irrigate 1,700 bighas of land and produce 17,000 maunds of additional foodgrains every year. More than 1,500 cultivators are expected to benefit by the scheme.

The State Government has decided to allot 15 bighas of land in every village to the local panchayat to serve as as a permanent source of income to panchayats. The panchayats will be free to use this land for developing orchards and nurseries. Government has asked the panchayat samitis to allot the land before the monsoon so that they can take up plantation work during the rainy months.

* * *

MYSORE

THE KARNATAK Divisional Co-operative Conference, has, in a resolution, resented the the growing Government control over co-operative bodies. It has opposed the method of nominating the boards of management of new societies and the powers of the Government in certain circumstances to exercise control over societies receiving Government aid. It also demanded that nominees of the Registrar and financing agencies should be prevented from participating in the election of office-bearers. The conference disapproved of the Government's insistence that societies should adopt the model bye-laws without any change.

By another resolution, the conference characterised as unduly rigid and unjust the Registrar's directions insisting on full repayment of old loans before advancing new loans to parties and suggested that central financing agencies should be permitted to prescribe their own rules in this regard.

The conference also demanded that co-operative bodies in the integrated areas in Mysore should be given representation on District Development Councils. It said that co-operative institutions should be allowed to receive deposits from village panchayats, municipalities and other local bodies.

It also asked for the creation of a separate financing agency for urban banks in view of the restrictions placed by the Reserve Bank on advancing loans to individuals by the district financing agencies.

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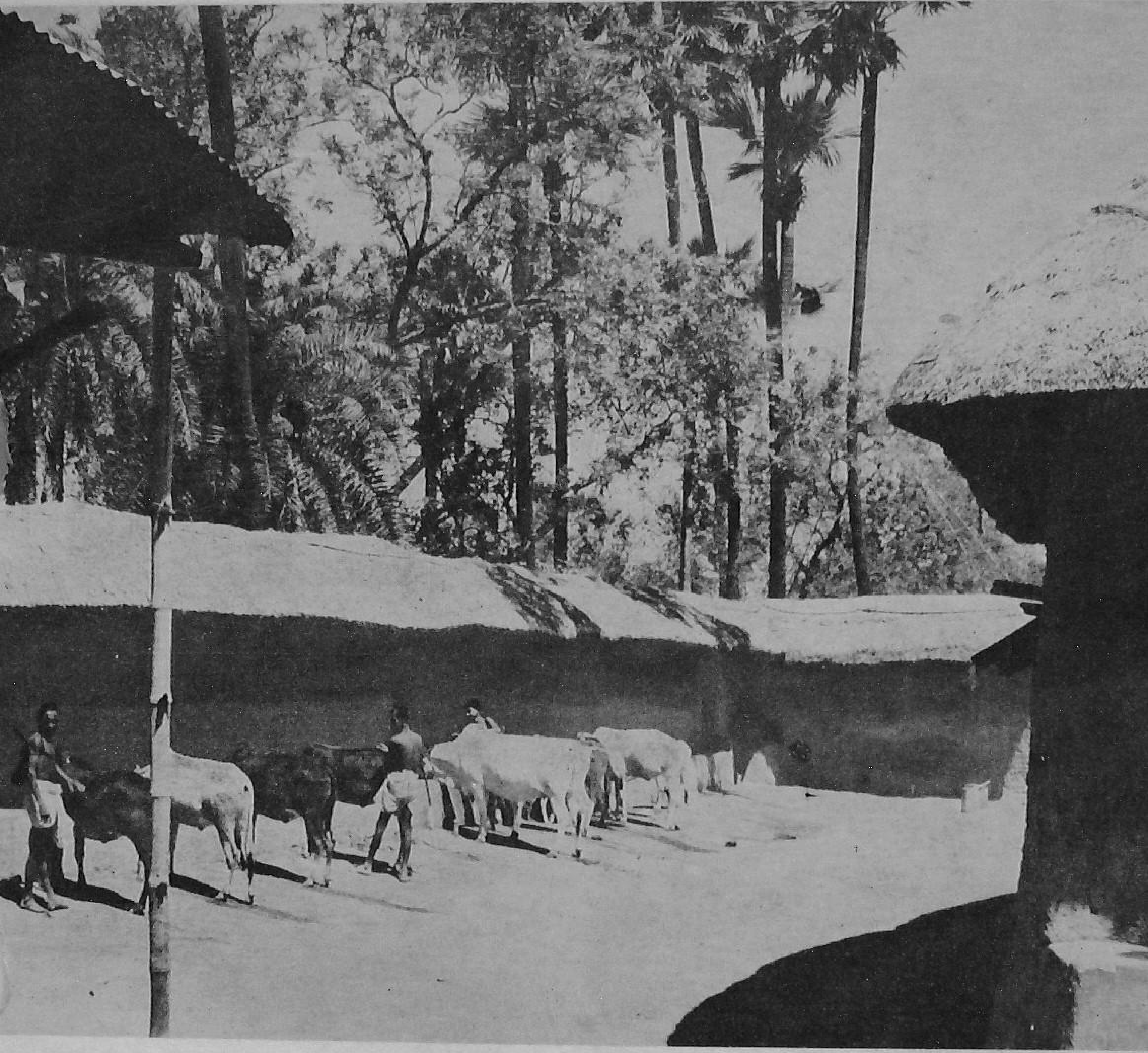

A CLEAN HOMESTEAD WITH HEALTHY CATTLE

The Community Development Programme has registered an impact on the minds of our villagers. The picture above shows a typical home in rural West Bengal which stands out for its cleanliness and healthy cattle

A VILLAGE MARKET SCENE

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